

# IN RESPECT OF DISTANCE

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Beard of Bees Press  
Chicago, Illinois  
Number 45  
November, 2007

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“make straight in the desert a highway”

## Who promised safe passage?

passengers wear wool coats  
for warmth  
and space articulates  
alters  
everything  
packed into a suitcase  
experience  
attenuates  
the line  
bruised by construction  
by what has taken place  
the promise  
devoured by haste  
scattered by traffic  
lights  
the small rough place  
a child's palms  
pairs of them  
turn  
her role  
in a foreign land  
where neglect is native  
and speech is robbed  
in an alley of notecards  
all  
isles  
hang inside a closet of worries

where wedged parents  
quarrel  
prisoners  
of a country wrapped in plastic  
a society  
shelled by images  
packaged for the child  
to buy into

which	bowl	size
would	fit	different
bed	size	which

inhabitants collide  
quote  
the city's thirst  
audible  
this Technicolor fairy tale  
turned neighborhoods into  
a closet of  
scars  
a family  
set out on a cruise  
in the dark weeks of the moon  
met gently the detestable  
moist / clash  
departure

**“wavering in the contradiction  
of so many scriptures”**

the old forward thrust of our ancestors

measured

the munitions

magnified

the hollow

headed for a state of scarcity

amidst so much affluence

people robbed and spoiled

for

a square, an apartment, a space

a building weighed by tongues

a dress, a dime, a bottle, a haircut

ashes            when            girl

snow            cold            dime

when            girl            snow

a story’s perspective

a thing

to calm

the shoppers / movers

the living room is empty

a nation divided

a moment where

everyone is called by name

instructed

suitcases packed

no end

of distractions  
mind not sufficient  
to scratch the surface  
without a night sky  
nothing  
to map the journey with  
before poppies bloom  
and play with wings  
vanity  
the great sorrow  
believes the fiction  
the flattery  
the tales  
sales  
castles with thick walls  
a note  
brought to the surface  
along with bills, groceries and children  
a phone call to a young girl  
about her measurements  
formed  
an image  
assembled  
the habit of wishing  
the structure of wanting  
marking wood to mark time  
a mob  
in a subway

seeking stale perfection  
among the rubble  
at this shore  
this particular shore  
this changing shore

## **Shaken by encounters in an eidolon-flooded city.**

drenched with water, parched by winds  
impoverished  
the never changing sounds of children in a schoolyard  
what must be  
sticks  
wrestles with army and power  
armed with preparations  
populated by the  
have, who, what, will  
the signal  
the foundations in a trench  
raging at misfortune  
a sitting affliction  
tense  
with the knowledge  
of mothers being shot  
buying guilt for their children  
presents for the  
neck, shoulders, mind  
grasshoppers  
dwell  
in information  
and bring  
nothing  
this country's dream apportioned unevenly  
filled with mirages

lie	mattress	lay
high	lying	false
mattress	lay	high

air memories are  
present tense  
uprooted  
and the number of blows  
spoke of violence  
burdens not lanterns  
of exhilaration  
bandages not drafts  
of elixir  
stained not by the pollen  
of an orchids' stamen  
but of a mute numb state  
of withering pleasure  
in pursuit of  
the city's buying game  
lit from the outside  
the stubble and the lipstick  
turn Eros into a gimmick  
a story read nightly to children  
changing the direction  
of choice

**“The pleasures that come from the world  
bear in them the sorrows to come.”**

lift

the rhetoric

it

cannot reveal bloodshed

the hanging

people assembled

framing a moment

gone

with its glistening architecture

its crowded streets

all

given

hand me down

shirts, skirts, screams

walk

forest

dark

journey

crumbs

walk

forest

dark

journey

created these things

these selves

empire

states

language mistaken for truth

enlisting numbers

names

in the battle cry

the sword fails

unless unsheathed  
hides  
word sheen  
asphyxiates  
the statue  
liberty passed over  
locked in the family study  
submerging what was known  
in an Atlantic approach  
where judgment came near  
to mob tactics  
years  
ahead  
it was declared  
the end  
in the future  
arrived at without protection  
weary  
with no one to watch  
the searching  
behind windows  
broken  
into

**Manufactured cravings are contrasted  
to the population of disuse.**

she stared at the ceiling  
a wandering  
witness to  
estrangement  
waits backstage  
wait  
the luxury liner makes its way  
contestants both audience and in residence  
work, eat, drink  
she stared at the ceiling  
half-forgotten  
in the corridors of fantasy  
pain became the vehicle  
that paved a way  
a weight  
a visible ripple in the cigarette smoke  
in yesterday's fight  
pushed into  
the background  
bright enormous tangle  
the years  
illuminated by street light  
the strategy  
to stare at the light  
TV light  
drenched

desire  
finds no satisfaction  
in the book of the battlefield  
the power of  
STOP

cinders	sweep	wash
type	dirt	earth
sweep	wash	wipe

GO  
coins  
the nation's cry  
if one could make money like that  
rule over  
dust  
then perhaps America  
wouldn't be so difficult  
wouldn't be a sword  
tearing air  
and driven  
to prod bare  
technology's bow  
gone  
with gorgeous grand tactics

## **Fall into the cuneiform, into the storm.**

explain stones floating

pursue

bodies in a strait

the materials

moving arms, feet, chest

fingers around a pencil

the first

attentive

unwrapping

the last excitement

of a credulous generation

longing for explanations

scourging each other

over particles

seen and feared

drink	large	grow
-------	-------	------

small	stand	large
-------	-------	-------

grow	small	think
------	-------	-------

the streets filled with jaundice

and jazz

contradictions

in the rhythm

exaggerations

and corporations

shops

and marigolds

governments

and cartoon illusions  
pushing  
a crowd  
crows  
duels  
neighbors became  
everyone said  
devoured  
and were readied  
for the carrier to spread  
tales  
fastened with nails  
crooked  
the seed was chosen  
we pretend  
it is the war against  
tactics of pretending  
in-between hostilities  
harboring hostilities  
such is the thing  
the plot  
travel between tight walls  
against  
the hand that led to blows  
the tongue that led to  
new sharp reactions  
beat the mountain small  
fighting marks the stage

scatters the days  
and the poor and needy  
seek water

**Between two contraries a household  
at cross-purposes.**

open the door to the city

the days of renewal

bring light and color

raise the sails

lime green, yellow, pale pink

reality is present

on the glistening leaves

or will our mental state

turn our days

call them tears

one-eyed

fish

drink

tail

which

desire

swim

devours

legs

exiled

while

fountains of iron sound

each

dry heroic sound

on the field of battle

plant a birch tree

consider

what may be seen

or heard

the shabby cloak

of degrading weakness

produced by

times of trouble  
and absent smells  
terrified  
to peel off  
what has happened  
if you have to wear  
a red hat to protect  
your head  
hurl your luggage  
lift  
your tongue  
stuck to the roof  
of what may be considered  
turn  
open-mouthed  
declare  
the dark place  
present  
come  
coeval we are  
dismayed we live  
together  
come  
contentions are  
conventions  
words stick  
the whirlwind  
chooses

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